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Ancient Spooks through Modern Specs:
The Contemporary Demand for Esoteric
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ANCIENT SPOOKS THROUGH MODERN SPECS:
THE CONTEMPORARY DEMAND FOR ESOTERIC HISTORY

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An astounding amount of evidence on the subject of “magic” and the occult has been found in the ancient world, including cure tablets, recipes, and stories. From the Book of the Dead to the myths surrounding the island of Thessaly, ghosts, witches, and necromancy all appear in historical texts. Yet these topics have only begun to be analyzed in earnest.¹ Ancient Egypt and ancient Greece, two immortal civilizations of the ancient world, have recently been found to be rife with what is, to the modern eye, grotesque practices and dark ideas about the nature of life and death. In the last several decades, there has been an explosion of study focused on this topic and an increased interest in magic, its definition, and uses within the historical context. Where does this sudden attention come from? Because modern American and European culture has become enamored with the esoteric, there has been a sudden increase in demand for arcane history. This focus has been romanticized from the contemporary framework which has built supernatural up to be so unusual and strange.

This is an exegesis on contemporary popular culture and its influence and how it steers the course of popular and academic history. In the past several decades, an increasing interest in gothic and supernatural phenomena has captured certain segments of the population. Movies, books, video games, and even fashion have dabbled in things arcane. From *Harry Potter* to death metal, the explosion in fascination in the occult has created a market for “weird history”.

This paper aims to unearth and expose the connection between popular demand and produced history by critically analyzing the association from several angles. We start with defining terms related to mysticism and the occult. Next, the evidence supporting the presence of magical practices in the Hellenic world will be investigated. Along the same vein, evidence proving the existence rational practices in ancient Egypt will be described. The correlation between modern demand and production of history can be rendered through a close examination

¹ Daniel Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) p xv.

of what has been produced, how it has been marketed, and towards whom it is directed. Why is modern American culture so fascinated with magic? An analysis of some contributing factors to the booming market of gothic can answer this question. Within this framework, we see how the modern romanticisation of magic influences the way the topic is studied, shared, and interpreted.

Definitions of magic, the occult, and terms associated with these vary widely among scholarship. Clearly defining these terms makes it easier to qualify meaning within this dialogue. There is, in the world of academia, a hesitancy to define the term “magic”. Daniel Ogden, one of the preeminent contemporary scholars delving into the occult in the ancient world is a scholar who continually plays with this dilemma of defining “magic”. “The definition of ‘magic’ is famously problematic, and authors... usually [fill] many pages of philosophical reflection.”² In his sourcebook, he limits his parameters to texts mentioning the word itself or words related to the subject, refusing to put specific parameters on the definition.

In another of his works, Ogden claims that it is a waste of time to define these terms since the concept is in itself, an abstraction.³ The terms themselves have become as ethereal as the concepts which they describe. Paul Ghalioungui, author of *Magic and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt*, defines magic as broadly as “[including] all measures protecting man against harm.”⁴ This definition is problematic, especially in regards to the modern perception of magic, because it could include anything from wearing a seatbelt to taking vitamins. There are a lot of modern contemporary connotations associated with many of words related to magic, and it is important to try to strip away those judgments and attempt to understand magic’s role within the context of ancient Egypt and Greece.

² Daniel Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.) p 5

³ Daniel Ogden *Night’s Black Agents: Witches, Wizards, and the Dead in the Ancient World*.(New York: Hambleton Continuum, 2008.) p 3.

⁴ Paul Ghalioungui, *Magic and Medical Science in Ancient Egypt*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1963.) p 17.

There is a need to distinguish magic from religion. Both are related to a need to depend on the supernatural and divine to explain the world in which we live. Ogden proposes that the difference is that religion serves to unite a community while magic distances the conductor from the social group.⁵ This is one of the reasons that modern culture is so charmed with the concept of the unusual: it goes against the grain of the status quo, it is the exotic nature of the Other.

Magic represents a concept of being “secret” and “hidden” there is a certain amount of awe placed in hidden ritual and secret knowledge. It is very similar to the concept of the arcane, which is strongly associated with knowledge known or knowable only by initiates. There is evidence in papyri and carvings indicative of secret knowledge and ritual in both ancient Egypt and ancient Greece.

Ancient Greece, to the contemporary imagination, represents the roots of western civilization. The Greeks were rational, democratic, and philosophic. However, new evidence and scholarship has been coming out to shed new light on the prevalence of magic and divination in Greek culture. It is much more difficult for modern western minds to insert these “irrational practices” into the understanding of ancient Greece with which we have become comfortable.

Divination through oracles, necromancy, and communication with ghosts was practiced in classical Greece. Information about the past and the future was channeled through consultation with oracles.⁶ Questions and responses were recorded in various mediums, and have been found to be written in both Demotic Egyptian and ancient Greek from the 3rd century B.C.E. forward⁷. The practice of divination found concurrently in ancient Egypt and Greece.

⁵ Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, eds. *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.) p xii.

⁶ Gregg Schwedner, “Under Homer’s Spell.” *Magic and Divination in the Ancient World*. (Leda Ciruolo and Jonathan Seidel, eds. Boston: Styx/Koninklijke Brill, 2002.) p 107.

⁷ Schwedner, “Under Homer’s Spell”, p 107.

Necromancy in ancient Greece, the practice of divination from the dead, is a topic that has recently been analyzed by Daniel Ogden in his book *Greek and Roman Necromancy*. The first evidence of these practices is in Homer's *Odyssey*, believed to be written around 700-650 B.C.E.⁸ There is evidence of the tradition in the places in which it occurred and the lexis describing the people who practiced it.

A place where necromancy was practiced is called *Nekuomanteion*⁹. There were four main centers where oracles of the dead practiced, Acherion in Thesprotia, Avernus in Campania, Heracleia Pontica on the south coast of the black sea, and Tainaron at the tip of the main Greek peninsula.¹⁰ One aspect of necromancy is the summoning of ghosts to seek information. Since ghosts were believed to linger near the corpses place of burial, tombs and battlefields were common places for *Nekuomanteion*.¹¹ The places in which necromancy occurred are indicative of its widespread prevalence.

A vocabulary existed for the persons who participated in these rituals, which proves that they were used since there was a need for their creation. *Psuchagōgus* describes an evocator, *goēs* a sorcerer, and there also existed various other words describing the concept of ventriloquism.¹² Anitra Bingham, in her essay "Persons of Power and their Communities" calls persons of power *Theioi andres*. The existence of these words attests to the presence of the practices and the people which performed them.

⁸ Ogden, *Necromancy*, p xxiii.

⁹ Ogden, *Necromancy*, p 17.

¹⁰ Ogden, *Necromancy*, p76.

¹¹ Ogden, *Necromancy*, p 3.

¹² Ogden, *Necromancy*, p 95.

Tools associated with magic in the Hellenic world have been found. These include curse tablets, amulets, and voodoo dolls.¹³ Peter T. Struck, author of the paper “The Poet as Conjurer: Magic and Literary Theory in late Antiquity” also supports the evidence of magical items. “In the *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, [talisman] refers to... cloth, metal, or a gem which is written or engraved with a spell.”¹⁴ This indicates that not only were objects considered to be imbued with power, but also attest to the existence of spells. These items give insight into a material culture associated with magical ritual.

Georg Luck supports the existence of magical practitioners in ancient Greece. There existed ghosts, magicians, sorcerers, and witches.¹⁵ How society interacts with these *Theioi Andres* is the topic of Anitra Bingham Kolenkow’s paper. She tackles both sides of the issue, from the common opinion that magical practitioners were outcasts to the idea that they were actually revered in their communities.¹⁶ Ogden suggests that the professionals of these arcane rites were generally scorned by society.¹⁷ In either case, the proficient were marginalized to society, either from awe or fear.

Directly contrary to an inability to accept these strange practices in ancient Greece is the eroticization the occult in ancient Egypt. Modern culture is enamored with the creepy magic and strange and bizarre practices of the ancient Egyptians, from death rituals to holy cures. There is a kind of acceptance that Egypt represents this strange, supernatural obsessed people while Greece

¹³ Ogden, Daniel, “Part 1: Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds,” *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*. (Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, eds. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.)

¹⁴ Peter T. Struck, “The Poet as Conjurer: Magic and Literary Theory in Late Antiquity. *Magic and Divination in the Ancient World*. (Leda Ciralo and Jonathan Seidel, eds. Boston: Styx/Koninklijke Brill, 2002.) p 123.

¹⁵ Georg Luck. “Part 2: Witches and Sorcerers in Classical Literature,” *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*. (Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark, eds. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.) p v.

¹⁶ Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, “Persons of Power and Their Communities.” *Magic and Divination in the Ancient World*. (Leda Ciralo and Jonathan Seidel, eds. Boston: Styx/Koninklijke Brill, 2002.) p 130.

¹⁷ Ogden, *Necromancy*, p 95.

represents rationality and empiricism, when, in fact, both the natural and supernatural coexisted in both cultures.

Ancient Egypt, to the popular mind, is the land of mummies, evil curses, and bizarre religious ritual. The most commonly known text from Egypt is the Book of the Dead, not any of the many papyri indicating the level of empiricism in ancient Egypt. Practices of divination, ritual, incubation, curses, and spells are evidenced from writings, tombs, and art.¹⁸ There needs to be a fair mention, however, of the presence of strong, empirical natural science in the land of the Nile, especially in medicine, architecture, astronomy, and mathematics.¹⁹ Many of these advances and discoveries influenced science and philosophy in ancient Greece.

Speculating about the current propensity to consider Egypt as exotic and Greece as the cradle of rationality can give us insight into contemporary American culture. Popular history serves not only to entertain and interest but also to teach certain lessons. It has been used as a tool of propaganda to imbue a sense of nationalism, to maintain the status quo, and to nourish cultural perceptions of the other. What lessons are implanted into American identity by imagining these two ancient cultures as we do? Whether it is to make money or imbue a sense of democracy and unity, our perceptions of the past take on meaning in accordance with our cultural values.

The image popular history holds of ancient Egypt arose from the material culture which remains from the land. Because of astounding preservation techniques and the dry environment perfect for lasting death, much of the evidence we have is related to death. The unknown, bizarre, and attractive concept of death screams for attention from the contemporary mind. Mummies rise from the dead like zombies, awakened from their eternal slumber. Curses, booby-

¹⁸ Ghalioungui, *Magic and Medical Science*, p 16.

traps, treasure, and death. It is no wonder that our image of the land of the pharaohs has developed into such a romantic ideal.

Considering Egypt erotic and strange serves several functions to contemporary North American culture. First, it is a wellspring of cool ideas for the entertainment industry, mysteries, thrillers, suspense. Indiana Jones thwarts traps to get the gold. Cursed mummies seek revenge on those who would dare stir them. These ideas sell, bringing in money for movies, television shows, museums, and documentaries delving into the strange mysteries of this death obsessed society. This demand based market is a foundation of USA capitalist ideals. Ancient Egypt as a treasure trove for profit maintains our consumer based culture which allows our economy to function.

Something must be mentioned as far as Africa-based racism and otherization of this near-eastern, now Muslim geographical area. Martin Bernal sparked a shattering debate his 1987 publication of *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. He through the academic community into an uproar with his ideas that African and middle eastern science, philosophy, and rationalism was the origin for Greek society.²⁰ In *Black Athena Revisited*, Mary R. Lefkowitz challenges Bernal's position that ancient historians are racist and conveniently deny the African roots of Greek, and thus western, civilization.²¹ The debate sparked questions of race, "advances" in ancient societies, and trade and sharing networks. This relates to the topic of the romanticisization of Ancient Egypt because of the way we make it different from ourselves. Ancient Egypt is "right on the edge" of the middle east, and now a muslim land. Contemporary culture finds any excuse to otherize this region and people following the Muslim

²⁰ Martin Bernal, (*Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization: Volume 1 the Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987.)

²¹ Mary R.Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers. *Black Athena Revisited*.(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.) p 3

tradition. It is such a politically charged and sensitive subject, especially post-911. Our image of this land maintains this sort of disgust at bizarre ritual, and this affects our contemporary understanding of the region.

On the other hand, Washington D.C., the seat of North American political power, is in its very architecture modeled after ancient Greece. School children are taught that Athens is the place where the first ideas of democracy was sparked, through certainly some form of democratic ideas have been around as long as humans have had to make decisions together. The brilliant ideas of ancient Greek philosophers are the reason that western society has been able to dominate the world. Democracy, unity, and a sense of nationalism are ideas which have come to infuse the modern American mind. Ancient Greece has a status so high that to consider ourselves its progeny is an honor. By reinforcing these ideas through what we emphasize in popular history and entertainment, our existing cultural situation of a unified democracy.

The images we've created are fortified in a variety of ways. Documentaries are made not to inform on an academic level, but to sell. Programs emphasizing the rational roots of democracy in classical civilization are just as popular as mysterious Egyptian studies. History textbooks which are used in our education system must generalize about these societies by necessity, since they are broad and brief surveys of huge swaths of the historical narrative. Egyptian art is ogled over while the philosophical ideals of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are dismembered and analyzed by university students.

Scholars are beginning to attempt to challenge these ideas, writing against the opinions to which our culture is accustomed. In his book, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, E.R. Dodds attempts to shed light on the supernatural, religious aspects of Greek society, challenging the

tendency to focus solely on the rational.²² In her 2007 publication *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks*, Esther Eidinow also writes about the subjects described in her titles, against the tradition of emphasizing science, mathematics, and democracy.²³ Ogden especially, as analyzed above, has begun in-depth study of the occult in the Ancient world. A well-respected Classicist and Medical Historian, Ludwig Edelstein, has detailed the advanced, rational medical practices of ancient Egypt, as can be found in *Ancient Medicine: Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein* published in 1967.²⁴ J.R. Harris, an economic historian, wrote about Egyptian use of calendars, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and a complex canonical tradition setting human proportions in art²⁵. All of these publications indicate an effort in the ivory tower of academia to challenge popular assumptions and generalizations of the natural and supernatural in the ancient world.

Despite this commendable scholarly work, there is still a deep fissure dividing academic from popular history. Each serves a different purpose, one to entertain, enculture, and give a broad understanding of the world, and the other to deeply analyze human commonalities, purposes, agency, psychology, and actions. These different ideas of an irrational Greece and a rational Egypt are difficult to insert into the established imagination we have of these ancient civilizations.

In the last few decades, contemporary American culture has become fascinated by things arcane. Some examples of are vampires, werewolves, ghost stories. It has become increasingly “cool” to openly admire dark and unusual things. Daniel Ogden argues that most contemporary

²² E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951) Preface.

²³ Eidinow, Esther. *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.)

²⁴ Edelstein, Ludwig. *Ancient Medicine; selected papers of Ludwig Edelstein*. Owsei Temkin and C. Lilian Temkin, eds. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1967.

²⁵ J.R. Harris, *The Legacy of Egypt*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 1-12.

media relating to this topic is directed toward “amateur” interested people, or undergraduates.²⁶ Popular history plays on this trend by reinforcing modern conceptions, especially those of ancient Egypt. From the belief that aliens helped build the pyramids, (another strange Other group) to the popularity of mummies, contemporary society has come to generalize the thousands of years of Egyptian culture into a Halloween of cool and creepy ritual.

The sudden explosion in media relating to magic, the occult, and divination are enculturating our society to be fascinated with the topic. The purpose of giving examples is not to analyze them in detail, but rather to show the scope and multitude of their presence in American culture. Some examples that have cropped up include: holidays (Halloween, Day of the Dead) TV shows (Sabrina the Teenage Witch, True Blood), movies (Horror flicks, Harry Potter, Twilight) video games (Left4Dead, Resident Evil, Necromancy in games such as Oblivion and Morrowind) music (Michael Jackson’s “Thriller”, the death metal band Cradle of Filth, Goth rock, concept albums) fashion in music (Marilyn Manson, Danny Filth, Slipknot) street fashion (gothic/emo/scene styles) new magic (people actually practicing magic and studying ancient magic from this framework, Ouija boards, fortune telling, and more). This is only a tiny list of all the possible examples of this fascination manifesting into different forms of pop culture.

Among this fascination grows a powerful market demanding the esoteric from history. Already ancient Egypt satisfies this demand, and a new movement by scholars is to begin to look at its prevalence in Ancient Greece. It is more difficult for the modern imagination to accept that the ancient Greeks practiced such things; however, more evidence is surfacing about the presence of magic, the occult, and divination in Hellenic city-states. Accepting that a society can at once be rational and scientific and also depend to some extent on supernatural forces is a necessary step to understanding rationality and the supernatural in classical Greece.

²⁶Ogden, *Night’s Black Agents*, p 3.

Why is contemporary western culture so mesmerized by these concepts? The answer is complex. There is an addictive quality to gothic media, and it only increased in the last decade of the 20th century. Early gothic writings appeared during the end of the 18th century, the Fin de Siecle, a time of uncertainty and fear of what the new millennium might bring.²⁷ The explosion of media related to the occult in the 1990s can be marked by *Silence of the Lambs* winning the 1991 academy award for Best Picture. The decade preceding the turn of the 20th century is marked with fear of the unknown future, uncertainty, and doubt. Previous to this time, horror films were cheap productions marketed toward a young, rebellious audience²⁸. The expensive, well-cast *Silence* opened the gates to a more mainstream following.

What about American culture allowed this movement to take root? What function does fascination with the occult serve? The culture of gothic is an outlet of rebellion which won't harm the status quo, and provides a new lens through which to view the world. Terror is sexy. We are far removed from the reality of death. Finally, magic and the occult served in both the past and the present to explain the unknown. Though modern American culture is "advanced" from our point of view, there is a great deal about the universe, our own world, even human nature itself that is not accounted for. Gothic fascination is one way to acknowledge and assuage our fears of the indefinite.

In the past, Edmundson suggests, artists used the art of haunting to reveal reality in "darkened shades".²⁹ Rendering and distorting science and what we consider to be truth gives us a new view of our own reality, shocking us into new perspectives. During a time consumed by fear of terrorism, fear of apocalypse, and fear of the criminal down the alley, Americans are

²⁷ Mark Edmundson. *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadoomasochism, and the Culture of Gothic*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.) p xi.

²⁸ Edmundson, *Nightmare*, p 3.

²⁹ Edmundson, *Nightmare*, p xiii.

grasping at new ways to look at things, to protect ourselves, and a chance to be the hero. Horror and the unknown, when accessed, can reassure our own fear of the unknown.

Edmundson grants gothic two roles. It exposes the cruel, lustful, perverted world which many of us, in part, believe is a hidden part of our world.³⁰ Americans are obsessed with fear; we are fed it constantly on the news, in entertainment, from our government and the very name of “terrorism”. By engaging in stories of horror and strangeness, we have an outlet for our fear.

Another reason fear is so popular is because it is sexy. From sadomasochism to glamorous vampires, there is a lustful attraction to the forbidden ‘R’ rated horror. Edmundson argues that ‘Terror has probably never been so hot, surely never so lucrative.’³¹ the reality is that gothic is a money machine. People like to touch the fire; it goes against the grain of our staunch puritan values and we can have the rush of stealing a cookie from the jar.

The modern fear of and fascination with death is another component which has increased our demand for death-related practices in history. It is easy for historians and archaeologists to study death since it is a large part of what remains of past civilizations. We attach meaning to what is buried with a body, how a dead person is treated, and any other significant details. The availability of information about death in history makes it seem all the more fascinating.

In contemporary American society, exposure of death is, for the majority of people, limited to entertainment. Ogden suggests that “the culture and representation of death has been marginalized, and that we [in western societies] assume that death brings oblivion.”³² Modern North American culture is so distanced from death that instead of being a day-to-day reality, it has become an issue elevated to an awe-inspiring status because of its associations with the unknown.

³⁰ Edmundson, *Nightmare*, p 4.

³¹ Edmundson, *Nightmare*, p 4.

³² Ogden, *Necromancy*, p xv.

Rarely do contemporary people see death, and if they have, it is a shaking and traumatic experience. Death was omnipresent in the ancient world, it was an everyday reality.³³ The ancient people were exposed to death to a much higher degree to the modern, so there is today a huge fascination with practices related to death.

Finally, gothic is a way to explain the unknown. Diane Purkiss, author of *At the Bottom of the Garden: A Dark History of Fairies, Hobgoblins, and Other Troublesome Things*, explores the role that fairies have played in society. Though a specific example, it can be broadened to include “magical things”. She writes

“Human nature ...abhor[s] a blank space on the map. Where there are no human habitations, no towns, where villages dwindle into farms and farms into woods, mapping stops. Then the imagination rushes to fill the woods with something other than blank darkness: nymphs, satyrs, elves, gnomes, pixies, fairies. Now that we have mapped every inch of our own planet, our remaining blank spaces lie among the stars. Unable, like our forebears to tolerate space uninhabited, we have made with our minds a new legion of bright and shining beings to fill the gaps left by our ignorances .Aliens are our fairies.”³⁴

Our fears manifest in ways which are, most probably, irrational. But at least there is *something* to fill the void of our imagination. If we have a more concrete idea of our possible adversary, no matter how fantastic, we feel better about our ability to defeat it, to overcome something tangible.

In both ancient Egypt and ancient Greece, magic served to explain and manage the unknown, to fill the blank spaces of knowledge with something tangible. Philip Slater, author of *The Wayward Gate: Science and the Supernatural* proposes that explaining something is

³³ Ogden, *Necromancy*, p xv.

³⁴ Diane Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden: A Dark History of Fairies, Hobgoblins, and Other Troublesome Things*. (New York: New York University Press, 2000.) p 3.

controlling it.³⁵ The survival of man is based in our ability to control and manipulate our environment to allow for our propagation. We control rational things through science, and things which we do not yet understand by “magic”, in its various manifestations. Raymond Firth writes that “magic comprises of a rite and verbal formula projecting man’s desires into the external world on a theory of human control.”³⁶ The unknowns in various societies have differed throughout time and across the globe, but the basic function of science and magic are inherently similar. Slater suggests that “no system succeeds because it is true—it succeeds because it *delivers* in some way.”³⁷ The belief of magic delivered what was needed to the ancient people of Egypt and Greece, just as our current fascination delivers to us satisfaction, entertainment, reassurance, rebellious outlet, and the maintenance of the status quo.

Our ideas regarding the strange practices associated with magic in ancient Egypt and Greece need to be re-imagined to fit in with the ancient context. To us, these concepts are fascinating and strange, while to the ancients, they were common practices.

Scholars are beginning to look at the past in a new way, through the lens of a culture which has increasingly romanticized the bizarre. Books, articles, and scholarship about divination, necromancy, and the occult have proliferated at exponential rates in recent years. Because modern culture has become enamored with the esoteric, there has been a sudden increase in demand for arcane history.

Contemporary culture has become lost in an exotic hall of mirrors through which we attempt to understand ourselves by looking at the past. The current demand and obsession with the supernatural has colored some of those mirrors, giving us images of a bizarre and ritual filled

³⁵ Philip Slater. *The Wayward Gate: Science and the Supernatural*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1977.) p 20.

³⁶ Raymond Firth, “Reason and Unreason in Human Belief” in *Witchcraft and Sorcery: Selected Readings*.(Max Marwick, ed. Baltimore: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970.) p 38.

³⁷ Slater, *Wayward Gate*, p 4.

Egypt and a rational and scientific Greece. However; magic, the occult, and divination were present in both societies. It would be an injustice to either to emphasize or minimize these ritual's roles within either society. Modern historians and "amateurs" must not allow a single concept to define an entire society for them.

The concepts must be re-contextualized to suit both societies. It was not either natural or supernatural. Both coexisted in both societies. It is fair to blur the lines, to say that things are not as simple as we would like them to be. It is time that we attempt to accept history in all its complexity rather than trying to force it into neat compartments. It is necessary to find the tones between the white and black through which we habitually to view the world.

The relationship between diviners and historians is not so distant: Historians use evidence to try to figure out what happened in the past. Diviners use evidence to try to figure out what will happen in the future. Contemporary culture must be able to look at the past with an intention to preserve the future, in as balanced and objective a way as possible.

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